

Soft and Secure

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Category: How to Train Your Dragon

Genre: Friendship, Hurt-Comfort

Language: English

Characters: Hiccup

Status: Completed

Published: 2011-08-04 04:25:48

Updated: 2011-08-04 04:25:48

Packaged: 2016-04-26 12:50:56

Rating: K

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,247

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Little Hiccup has his tunic nearly ripped in two during a Sword-fighting Lesson and needs to visit Unni, one of Berk's three Seamstresses. He only anticipated leaving with a new shirt.

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There was a rattle as the door to Unni's shop opened. The cowbell that she'd attached to the entrance irritated a great many villagers, but she found it rather helpful. Unni was a seamstress, one of three on Berk, though she was the only one who had been friends with Valhallarama before she died.

From behind a massive crate of unspun cotton and fur pelts, she peeked her head to see Gobber the Belch. Hiding behind the man was the small Haddock boy, shaking as if he'd seen death itself.

She moved out into the open, at which the boy gave a frightened start.

"What you need be done?" she asked.

"He needs a new tunic. One without a swordslash down the back." Gobber turned Hiccup around where he stood, none too gently.

Unni looked at the boy's top, which sported a long, jagged rip down almost the entire back of the piece. "Swordfighting Practice, eh? No patching that." She sighed, surveying the tear and finding that several chunks of the fabric were missing altogether. "I'm afraid I don't have any Hiccup-sized tunics on hand. Woncha leave him here and I'll fit him for some new clothes?"

Gobber shrugged. "Suit yourself. Just make sure he keeps himself out of trouble." He told her, before looking at the boy. "Don't touch the cutting knives. Or the spindle. Or anything sharp." He said sternly

before hobbling back out the door, grumbling something about a 'stupid cow bell.'

This left Hiccup alone with Unni, whom he smiled meekly at. He liked her enough. She was nice. But she undoubtedly disliked Hiccup as much as the rest of the Village. He had a feeling that, if he weren't Valhallarama's son, that she would not have permitted the boy into the shop. The other seamstresses certainly wouldn't; that's why he was at Unni's in the first place.

She returned the smile and set to the task at hand.

"So, tell me, Hiccup. What've you been up to, lately? Gettin into more trouble, by the sounds of it."

The boy let out a noncommittal mumble.

"Oh, come on. Besides, what life without a little mischief?"

He looked at her. The other villagers didn't condone his curiosity and aptitude for mischief. Did she? Hiccup decided to test her, to trust her with something that had been burning inside him for a while. His green eyes followed her intently as she meandered around the room, prepping for her next project. "I can talk to dragons." He said curtly, with a surprising amount of solidity for a seven year old. "I hear them during raids."

Unni stopped her work and looked back at the boy, feeling just shy of thunderstruck. "Do you." It came out as more of a statement than the question it was supposed to be, and she feared that her unintentional tone might deter the boy from talking further.

Indeed, he merely nodded, meek and frail as always, the confidence about him now lost. He sat himself atop a small crate of mole skin as Unni came to take his measurements.

The measuring twine was wrapped around his middle when she spoke. "Aren't you going to tell me more about how you talk to dragons?" Her voice was softer than Hiccup ever remembered hearing it. Normally, she barked orders to the children running through her shop, or conversed loudly with other adults. Here, she seemed almost gentle.

It was a funny thought, Unni, gentle. He remembered once, not too long ago, when she'd chased Ruffnut and Tuffnut out of the shop with a broom.

"I hear them talk." He said, quietly. "If I listen really hard, I can hear them roar under the words. But it's mostly them shouting at us, shouting at the other dragons. Asking for help and stuff like that." He reached for a small swatch of fur that was on the crate next to him as Unni measured his arms.

"Do they ever say anything to you specifically?" she asked.

He shook his head. "No. But sometimes, I try to talk to them. I don't think it works, they never answer." He sat the piece of fur in his lap and started petting it as Unni worked. She looked up from her work to see him tracing the fur with his fingers, staring at the brown material in his lap.

"Maybe they just don't know you're talking to them. Vikings don't usually talk to the dragons while they fight. Maybe they just don't expect you to be talking to them."

"You believe me?" he asked, wide eyed.

"O' course I do." She said, calmly. "I've never known you to lie before, Hiccup."

By this time, she was stitching together a new tunic. Green, being his favorite color, was always kept in abundance in the shop, because sooner or later, Hiccup needed new clothes. Be it because something had happened to his existing clothes, or because he'd simply outgrown them, he was almost in constant need of new clothes. When she neared the finish, Hiccup shed his shredded tunic, shivering in the cold October air that had wafted into the stall. For the moment, he donned a nearby vest, running his fingers through the fur.

Unni turned to him and laughed at the sight. The vest was far too large for the seven year old boy, the bottom of it reaching nearly down to his ankles. The armholes were sagging halfway down his torso, and the boy was nearly staggering under the weight of the thing, yet he still wore it as if it were made for him.

Hiccup hastily changed clothes, eager to be warm again. When the tunic was properly adjusted, and Unni had made sure all the stitching was in the right place and that he was comfortable, she offered to walk him home. Hesitantly, the boy agreed, stealing a quick glance at the fur vest. With a smile, Unni grabbed it and eased it onto the boy. "If you like it so much, Hiccup, it's yours."

"Really?" he asked, surprised. This was the kind of fur that his father used to wear when he and Gobber went on hunting parties.

"Really." She took the boy's hand and began leading him back to his house.

As the two passed a flock of particularly angry sheep, his insides squirmed with an unpleasant reminder. "Unni?" he asked, small and fearful and regretting that she was walking him home. The seamstress hummed a response, looking down at him as they walked. "I hate to ask, but can you do one more thing for me?" Hiccup already knew that the new tunic and fur vest would cut considerably into her profit; she considered anything given to the Haddock family a gift, not a sale.

"What's that, little dragon whisperer?"

"Don't tell my dad about the dragons. He wouldn't like it." He said, quietly.

For a moment, a grim tone was set on her face. She would never dream of lying to Stoick, and the chief's son knew that. She smiled, nonetheless. "O' course, Hiccup." She said.

Tibby Says:

Unni is Norse for "Modest." It can be used as either a boy's or a

girl's name.

Yes, Hiccup has had that SAME FUR VEST since he was seven.

End
file.